

## Presidential 'birther bill' advances in state House

by **Casey Newton** - Apr. 19, 2010 03:27 PM  
The Arizona Republic

The so-called "birther bill" won initial approval from the House of Representatives on Monday, advancing legislation that would require presidential candidates to produce a birth certificate before they can make the ballot in Arizona.

The legislation originated from a fringe group that believes is not a natural-born citizen of the United States and therefore ineligible to be president.

Rep. Judy Burges amended Senate Bill 1024 to include a requirement that Arizona's **Secretary of State** inspect a presidential candidate's birth certificate before that candidate could qualify for the ballot.

Similar laws have been proposed in Oklahoma, Florida and Missouri. None have been signed into law.

Democrats criticized Burges' amendment, saying presidential candidates already had to prove their citizenship before they can run for the office.

"**Republicans** continue to take Arizona down the wrong track by wasting taxpayers' time on frivolous legislation instead of working on important issues like health care for kids and seniors and education," said Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Phoenix, in a statement.

Burges, a Skull Valley Republican, did not

respond to a call for comment.

Arizona Secretary of State Ken Bennett also expressed concern about Burges' amendment, saying that creating state-level eligibility requirements to run for **federal office** could violate the U.S. Constitution.

"While everyone has an interest in ensuring that only eligible citizens run for president, there are obvious issues with states implementing what could become a patchwork of different tests for a **presidential candidate** to prove his/her citizenship," said Bennett's spokesman, Matthew Benson, in an e-mail.

The amended bill still needs final approval from the House and will require another vote in the **Senate** before it can be transmitted to Gov. Jan Brewer.

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